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GREAT WAR BETWEEN BALKAN STATES AND TURKEY IS RESULT OF ANCIENT FEUD AND NATIONAL STRIFE

Underlying Causes for Combat That Now Threatens Peace of All Europe

BY PROF. W. D. ALEXANDER.

[The following article on the Balkan war was part of an address made last Monday night before the Social Science Club by Professor W. D. Alexander. On account of its length, the first part of the address, which was historical in nature, has to be omitted.]

Beginning with the overthrow by the Turks of the peoples now composing the so-called Balkan states, and particularly those inhabiting Bulgaria, Prof. W. D. Alexander last Monday evening delivered a lecture on the causes leading up to the present hostilities in the Balkans. The real history of the present troubles begins with the so-called treaty of Berlin signed in 1878, following the bitterly contested war between Russia and Turkey. After mentioning the fact that the rank and file of the Russian Bulgarian armies regarded that fight as one for Christianity, Prof. Alexander goes on to say:

"By the treaty then concluded at San Stefano, Bulgaria was erected into a semi-independent state, extending as far west as the border of Albania, with ports on both the Black Sea and the Aegean, leaving the province of Adrianople and the Chalcidian peninsula to the Turks. This did not suit the views of either Great Britain or Austria (who with reason considered that the new state would be practically a mere dependency of Russia), and at their demand the Congress of Berlin was convened in July, 1878, to reconstruct the whole arrangement. To limit the extension of Russian influence, the congress gave a slice of Bulgaria to Serbia, the Dobruja to Roumania, and cut the remainder into three pieces, with entire disregard of the welfare and wishes of its inhabitants.

"The province north of the Balkan range, with a population of two millions, was to be an autonomous principality, with a prince of its own choice, but burdened with a tribute to Turkey.

"Central Bulgaria, or East Roumelia, south of the Balkans, with about one million inhabitants, three-fourths of whom were Bulgarians, (far more advanced in civilization and education than the northern province), was cut off from the body to which it belonged, and made an 'autonomous province' subject to Turkey under a Christian governor, appointed by the Sultan.

"Southwestern Bulgaria or Macedonia, with a population of about two millions, more than two-thirds of whom are Bulgarians, was put back under Turkish rule, to be a bone of contention in the future.

"Austria has long considered it her destined prey. None of the reforms stipulated for by the 23rd article of the treaty of Berlin were ever carried out, and the condition of that province became worse than before the war. To read a Bulgarian book, to attack one's self to the Bulgarian Emperor, or to utter a Bulgarian song were held to be heinous crimes. Their schools were closed, their teachers imprisoned or exiled, and their printing presses destroyed.

"Especially during the last ten years Macedonia has been made an earthly hell. The unfortunate inhabitants have been cruelly persecuted by the Turks, aided by Albanian brigades and bands of guerrillas from Greece, who were encouraged and abetted by the Turkish government.

"On the other hand, there have been bloody reprisals and fruitless insurrections among the main hope of bringing about European intervention. Yet up to this time, the selfish policy of the three great Eastern powers has prevented any relief from being given to that suffering people.

"Partial Russian. "Prince Alexander of Battenberg (whose father, Alexander of Hesse, was brother-in-law to the Czar Alexander II.), was elected Prince of Bulgaria, April 29th, 1879. He began his reign with a cabinet of Russians, while his army was organized and officered throughout by Russians. Alexander II., the Liberator, was murdered March 13th, 1881, and was succeeded by his son, Alexander III., a reactionary.

"The Bulgarian people, however, while deeply grateful to Russia, were willing to be her allies but not her vassals. To assist the Prince and his Russian cabinet, the Czar kindly sent a couple of generals, Kaulbars and Soboleff by name. Failing to control the Sobranje, or parliament, they suspended the constitution by a coup d'etat in May, 1881, banished some of the liberal leaders, and carried the next election by the use of the military, falsifying returns and deceiving the voters.

"The brutal insolence of the Russian officers, who treated Bulgaria as a subject province, and their Prince as a mere satrap of the Czar, incensed both people and Prince.

"At length in July, 1883, the Prince came to an understanding with the national party, restored the constitution, and dismissed his foreign advisers.

"The Russian generals tried to incite the army to mutiny, but failed, and had to leave the country.

"In 1884 Aleko Pasha, the liberal governor of East Roumelia, was succeeded by Gavril Pasha, a tool of Russia, and a tyrant. At length the universal longing for union with Bulgaria could no longer be repressed, and on the 18th of September, 1885, by a spontaneous general uprising, with-out violence or disorder, the obnoxious governor was deposed, and a petition sent to Prince Alexander to accept the government of United Bul-

garia. The Prince, who was taken by surprise, after a brief deliberation, issued a proclamation accepting the responsibility, and proceeded to Philippopolis, where he was received with the wildest enthusiasm. The Turkish government then summoned a conference of the powers that signed the treaty of Berlin, pending which it raised 200,000 troops and concentrated them in Macedonia. The Czar, Alexander III., ordered home all the Russian officers in the Bulgarian army and showed the most bitter hostility to the Union.

"The Serbian War. "Greece and Serbia were transported with rage and jealousy, fearing the next move would be the annexation of Macedonia. They mobilized their armies and threatened war if the union were permitted.

"While the Conference was still in session, Prince Milan of Serbia, egged on by Austria, suddenly declared war against Bulgaria, Nov. 14th, 1885, and crossed the frontier with 107,000 men and 248 field pieces, in three divisions. The Serbians had immense advantages in numbers, arms and military training over the Bulgarian peasants, who had not been allowed to own any arms before 1878, and had but one officer left above the rank of captain, after the recall of the Russian officers.

"The main body of the Bulgarian army was absent in Roumelia, watching the Turks, but they made forced marches of over forty miles a day to save their capital. The 8th infantry, numbering 4,500 men, marched 59 miles in 32 hours over mountain roads. The detachments on the frontier were soon overwhelmed by numbers, but the scene changed when Prince Alexander arrived with reinforcements. He boldly took the offensive and showed himself an able general. In the bloody battles of Silivritza the Serbians were found to be no match for their opponents at close quarters. The Bulgarians stormed one entrenched position after another with the bayonet and drove the invaders back through the Drago-man Pass, and far beyond the frontier, until Austria sent the Prince a peremptory summons to halt or he would have to meet the Austrian army. An armistice was then agreed to, and peace was finally signed March 3rd, 1886.

"During that conference and long after, Great Britain was the firm friend and Russia the persistent enemy of Bulgarian freedom. Neither Russia nor Austria is willing to see a strong free state or a confederacy of free states grow up in the Balkan peninsula. The utmost that the Czar would concede was that the Porte might appoint Prince Alexander as governor of East Roumelia for five years, his appointment to be subject to the 'unanimous' approval of the powers. The Prince concluded a separate treaty with Turkey Jan. 31, 1886, and the protocol of the conference was signed on April 5th. Deshroutement of the Prince.

"The Czar, however, looked upon Bulgaria as a rebellious and ungovernable province. It now swarmed with Russian agents, and every consulate became a center of intrigue. Russian gold was poured into the country, and every effort was put forth to build up a Russian party. At length a conspiracy was formed by certain malcontent officers and politicians, abetted by the Russian consul-general, to revolutionize the government.

"At midnight, August 20th, 1886, the Prince was seized and hurried off to the Danube, where he was put on board a steam yacht and carried to Reut in Russia. The premier was imprisoned, the telegraph office seized, and a pro-Russian cabinet proclaimed. But this usurpation lasted but three days. Under the leadership of Stambouloff, president of the Sobranje, the whole country rose against it. The troops on the frontier marched on Sofia, imprisoned the conspirators, and put loyal men in their places. Prince Returns.

"The Prince, after a day's detention in Reut, obtained permission to travel through Russia. On arriving at Lemberg in Galicia, he received a grand ovation, and found messages from Sofia, urging him to return. Accordingly, he received such a welcome as few men have ever enjoyed. At the same time he sent an ill-advised, and humble dispatch to the Czar, who made a menacing reply, in which he betrayed his rage at the failure of the plot. Besides Germany and Austria, the Bulgarian government now sought to punish the conspirators. Believing its position to be untenable without the support of those powers, he abdicated September 7th, 1886, in order to save the country from a Russian invasion. The Czar afterwards conferred the grand cross of St. Stanislaus on Captain Gruelf, the chief kidnapper.

"Prince Alexander died October 23, 1893, at Gratz in Austria. The Interregnum. "Stambouloff was then chosen Regent, and held the helm of state through eight stormy years. He was the greatest man that Bulgaria has produced, an ardent patriot, of iron will and tremendous energy, but too uncompromising and overbearing. Elections were now ordered for October 10, 1886.

"The Czar sent Baron Kaulbars as his special agent, who demanded the release of the conspirators, and endeavored by threats, promises and bribes to stir up the people and the army against the Regency. Bands of Montenegrins and other desperadoes were imported to interfere with the elections, but were promptly suppressed. The Liberal Party carried nine-tenths of the elections. War was then threatened. All the Russian steamers on the Black Sea were sequestered, and an army of 40,000 men was ready to embark. A Russian Captain Nabokoff, with a band of fil-

busters, twice tried to seize the sea-port of Bourgas but failed, and was killed in the second attempt. Only the firm stand of the Great Powers saved Bulgaria and Europe from war.

"The Sobranje or Parliament met October 31, and on the 10 of November, elected Prince Waldemar of Denmark who declined the honor. Russia proposed Prince Nicholas of Mingrelia, an employe in her foreign office, but the Bulgarians rejected him.

"The Czar then urged Turkey to interfere, but without success. The illustrated conspirators stirred up multitudes in two towns on the Danube, which were summarily put down and the leaders shot.

"In July 1887 the Sobranje offered the sovereignty to Prince Oscar of Sweden, who also declined it. Their choice next fell upon Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, who accepted the honor and was sworn in August 14, 1887. His mother the Princess Clementine, was a daughter of Louis Philippe, former King of the French.

"During the life time of Alexander III, the Russian Government steadily refused to recognize him, and even proposed to Turkey a joint occupation, which the Porte refused.

"It was a period of incessant turmoil, teeming with conspiracies and assassinations committed by the enemies of Bulgarian independence. Stambouloff succeeded, however, in felling all their plots, in gaining the support of Great Britain and the Triple Alliance against Russia, and even in conquering the Porte, from which he obtained Alexander III, died November 1, 1894, and was succeeded by Nicholas II, the present Czar. Stambouloff had already been compelled to resign by Prince Ferdinand, who disliked his arbitrary methods, and was anxious to be reconciled with Russia. Forbidden to leave the country, he was assassinated in the streets of Sofia, July 16, 1895, (as many believe), with the complicity of the Prince. His murderers were never punished.

"In the following year, Prince Ferdinand was recognized by Russia and the other Powers, including Turkey. Under Prince Ferdinand.

"During all the turmoil of the past thirty years, the progress of Bulgaria in education, wealth and military power, has been paralleled only by that of Japan. Well aware that 'might makes right' in Europe today, Bulgaria has taken measures accordingly. As the military correspondent of the London Times states: 'Bulgaria, with an available strength of 400,000 men, and an efficient field army which may amount to 250,000 men with 700 guns, is by far the most formidable all experts who have visited Bulgaria speak in high terms of the Bulgarian army, which in organization, armament, and spirit appears to be formidable.'

"This is a remarkable showing for a little state numbering but 4,000,000 souls.

"For the past ten years it has been with Turkey the greatest difficulty that war with Turkey has been averted in view of the fearful state of things existing in Macedonia. It was no doubt Abdul Hamid's deliberate policy to gradually exterminate its Christian inhabitants, and fill their places with Albanians and Mohammedans brought from other quarters. In 1902 they rose in desperation, hoping to attract the notice of the Great Powers. The insurrection was put down in the usual savage manner, one hundred villages were burned, and Bulgaria was flooded with starving refugees.

"Then a Conference of the Great Powers was held, and the so-called 'Muzettek Programme' of reform was agreed upon, which, however, turned out to be a failure, as it left all the real power in the hands of the Turks who are past masters in dissimulation and the art of 'how not to do it.' The Young Turks.

"Great things were expected of the Young Turks, who came into power in 1909, proclaiming 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Justice,' but these hopes were destined to be disappointed.

"The Great Powers withdrew their agents from Macedonia, while the guerrilla bands came down from the mountains, and gave in their adherence to the new regime. It is a noteworthy fact that the army which retook Constantinople on the 25 of April, 1909, contained several thousand Christians of the Bulgarian race.

"But it soon became evident that the ideal aimed at by the Young Turks was a highly centralized government, under which all remnants of local self-government should be stamped out, all distinctions of age, religion and language ignored, and all the diverse nationalities Turkified.

"This policy fell with peculiar force upon the Albanian mountaineers, who had always considered themselves as an unconquered people, and allies rather than vassals of the Turks. They saw their ancient privileges abolished, their language tabooed in the schools, and forbidden to be written except in Arabic characters, a burdensome system of taxation and conscription imposed upon them, and to crown all, they were to be deprived of their arms.

"The inevitable result was rebellion. But they could not hold their own against trained troops, equipped with machine guns and Krupp cannon. As Mr. Herbert Gibbons, who has recently travelled through that region, states: The repression of the revolts of 1910 and 1911, has never been given to the world. It is too horrible to recount. The villages were burned, women violated, crops destroyed, and every rebel caught in arms shot or hanged. These statements apply chiefly to the northern part of Albania.

"This year they rose again in arms demanding full autonomy and the dismissal of the Cabinet. The Turkish army, which was already disaffected, refused to march against them, and

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The finder, Charles Collins, of San Phillips street, Toledo, Ohio, sent Miss Ann the slips of paper she had put in the bottle, saying he had found it out of Coronado bay while on a visit to California.

Captain John F. C. Fodgewald, U. S. A. (retired), of Louisville, Ill., made a report in the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, believing the bottle passed down the Ohio into the Mississippi, through the Gulf of Mexico, then across the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans, before it was finally washed up on the coast of California.

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